

September 11, 2019

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th St., Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Governor Newsom:

The 1,100 schools that make up the NCAA have always, in everything we do, supported a level playing field for all student-athletes. This core belief extends to each member college and university in every state across the nation.

California Senate Bill 206 would upend that balance. If the bill becomes law and California's 58 NCAA schools are compelled to allow an unrestricted name, image and likeness scheme, it would erase the critical distinction between college and professional athletics and, because it gives those schools an unfair recruiting advantage, would result in them eventually being unable to compete in NCAA competitions. These outcomes are untenable and would negatively impact more than 24,000 California student-athletes across three divisions.

Right now, nearly half a million student-athletes in all 50 states compete under the same rules. This bill would remove that essential element of fairness and equal treatment that forms the bedrock of college sports.

The NCAA continues to focus on the best interests of all student-athletes nationwide. NCAA member schools already are working on changing rules for all student-athletes to appropriately use their name, image and likeness in accordance with our values — but not pay them to play. The NCAA has consistently stood by its belief that student-athletes are students first, and they should not be employees of the university.

It isn't possible to resolve the challenges of today's college sports environment in this way — by one state taking unilateral action. With more than 1,100 schools and nearly 500,000 student-athletes across the nation, the rules and policies of college sports must be established through the Association's collaborative governance system. A national model of collegiate sport requires mutually agreed upon rules.

We urge the state of California to reconsider this harmful and, we believe, unconstitutional bill and hope the state will be a constructive partner in our efforts to develop a fair name, image and likeness approach for all 50 states.

Sincerely,
Members of the NCAA Board of Governors

Stevie Baker-Watson, DePauw University

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Ken Chenault, General Catalyst
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